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EYES IN THE SKY: The Falkland Islands and Middle East conflicts spurred the Russians to dramatic increases in the number of spy satellites they launch. CIA sources say the Soviets flung up as many as 12 top-of-the-line satellites to keep an eye on the British-Argentine Falklands war alone.

A top-secret CIA report explained that this is standard operating procedure for the Soviets in times of international crisis. "Since 1967, the Soviets have reacted to foreign crises either by increasing the launch rate or shortening the mission of their photo-reconnaissance satellites," the report states. It cited such examples as the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Soviets' invasion of Czechoslovakia the following year, the India-Pakistan war of 1971 and the Arab-Israeli war of 1973.